

Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee
MINUTES
September 29, 2016

Location: *Conference Call*
Time: *8pm to 9pm*

Members Present:

Dick O'Brien
Becky Kalagher
Larry Tucker
Dick Williamson

Meeting Minutes:

Welcome

Approve Previous Minutes

Meeting Minutes from 6/9/2016 Approved

Report on RTP Grant Round Status

The 2016 RTP Grants have been awarded. An event was held the previous Thursday at the Summit House in Amherst, MA. Ten grantees attended and one member of MARTAB, Dick O'Brien, who represented MARTAB and spoke at the event. Contracts are currently being processed for those grant recipients who have sent in paperwork. Projects should be able to start work within the next few weeks, once the contract is signed.

Trails Celebration Discussion

The initial announcement for the trails celebration was sent out on September 13, 2016. There has been some response for attending and for hosting trail expeditions. More activity hosts are needed and Amanda will send out an updated reminder with the options for hosted activities next week. Dick Williamson volunteered to host a rail trail bike ride, from the Manhan in Easthampton connecting to the Norwottuck Rail Trail. Dick O. will reach out to a couple of friends about a possible trail run and mountain bike host. Becky is looking into horseback riding opportunities in the area. Amanda will send out a new reminder with a list of the trail expeditions that will be offered at the Trails Celebration. She will host a hike at Mt. Tom if no one else comes forward to do so at the site. Amanda is working on a caterer and has secured a tent and chairs/tables for the event. It will be held at Mt. Tom State Reservation at no cost to MARTAB/DCR and the cost to attendees will be \$10, to pay for a portion of the food costs.

Trails Conference Discussion

Amanda will begin the planning process for the 2017 conference. Within a couple of weeks, she will select a date, collect quotes from three venues that are on the state vendor

list, and secure the location. A conference call will be scheduled after the trails celebration to discuss steps going forward. This may be a great topic to discuss at the celebration as well. Perhaps all who are meeting there can offer suggestions for a theme and some brainstorming on topics to cover and field trips to offer.

New Business

Larry Tucker inquired about where the working group stood on working towards an update on the Commonwealth Connections trail plan. Amanda explained that though the working group wants to see this effort continued, those involved were not able to offer time in their schedules to do so. Essentially, there is no room in anyone's schedule to take the lead and oversee the effort, which leaves the process as stalled at this point. Even if a contractor were hired to implement the steps necessary for the update, this would take time to hire, manage, consult and participate in necessary steps to complete the work. Ideally, if money could be found through the Environmental Bond Bill's RTP authorization to hire an employee to oversee the process from start to finish, that would allow the process to move forward. As of now, all agencies and departments are stretched too thin with regular duties to be able to take this on. The same goes for the volunteers who are trying to see this effort move forward, as they were not able to offer their time in the management of this work.

Dick Williamson requested a nomination form from Amanda so that he could submit for being appointed another term on the board. The board will vote on this at its January meeting.

Meeting Adjourned